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CHALLENGE



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**CAPITALISM =
IMPERIALIST
WARS** *PAGE 2*

Transit Workers Link Cuts to War

CALIFORNIA, March 7 — Last week the city transit board met in closed session to discuss forcing a war contract down the throats of union service attendants and mechanics. Outside, some transit workers held a noisy and spirited demonstration.

The workers leafleted and held signs attacking the U.S. government's plan to spill the "blood and treasure" of the working class to guarantee their supremacy over Middle East oil. During the demonstration, nearly 100 bus drivers, carrying several thousand passengers, honked their approval of signs beautifully lettered by a worker: "HONK IF YOU THINK TRANSIT MONEY SHOULD FIX BUSES, NOT TANKS"; and, "\$32 BILLION TO TURKEY FOR OIL PROFIT WAR, 50 CENTS TO BUS MECHANICS."

Drivers waved for leaflets to take back to their division break rooms. Transit workers boarded buses loaded with workers and made brief speeches linking the transit cuts on workers to increased transit fares in cities nationwide to the \$200 billion being spent for imperialist war in the Mid-East. Workers' power could dump the war-makers and their system.

Unfortunately we ran out of leaflets because we underestimated the receptivity of the drivers and passengers and their contempt for the company. There was nothing small about the disgust these

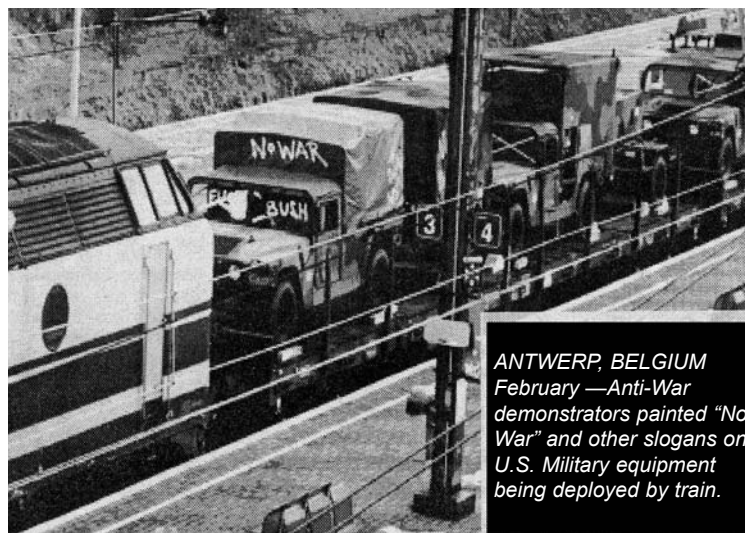
workers have for transit management or, as recent months have shown, the hatred they have for the misery that U.S. imperialism is bringing to the working class worldwide.

Although the demonstration was hastily organized, several transit divisions got leaflets. All morning, workers were asking if the demonstration was happening. As some were preparing to go to it, others scolded them saying, "Hey, get moving; it's already past time." Although those who were unable to participate because they were on the clock, still had an interest in an organized protest against the company's war contract.

The next day a worker said that although he'd been off work on the day of the demonstration, he wanted to help organize a larger one in the coming weeks. This time it could involve the whole day-shift after punching out, with signs, leaflets and a bullhorn, to demonstrate our opposition to the rotten contract offer.

This worker questioned whether the transit cuts were really paying for the U.S. tanks in the Iraq war. A good discussion followed about the many ways U.S. imperialism sucks the blood and squanders the treasure of the working class. ☛

Millions Stop Work To Protest War



Millions of workers across Europe stopped work for 15 minutes on March 14 to protest a U.S. invasion of Iraq. In Germany, the strikes halted production at three Volkswagen plants and a DaimlerChrysler factory. Italian workers downed tools from Sicily in the south to Turin in the north.

In Australia protesters hounded Prime Minister John Howard, hurling eggs and tomatoes at his limousine as he drove through the southern city of Adelaide. Traffic was brought to a standstill.

In Turkey two dozen activists chained themselves to the wheels of a truck blocking an entrance to the eastern port of Iskenderun, where U.S. forces were unloading equipment.

In Moscow, protesters hung a huge "Veto War" banner on a bridge across the Moscow River.

Anti-war protests also erupted in Egypt, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand and Japan. And on March 15, millions again protested against the war worldwide. One million marched in Spain alone.

Perhaps the most significant working-class action occurred in Ankara, Turkey on March 1, demonstrating what workers' power can accomplish. With the parliament meeting to decide whether or not to allow U.S. troops to invade Iraq from Turkish soil, over 100,000 workers and others from every corner of the country, especially from Kurdish provinces bordering Iraq, jammed the streets near parliament. They represented the 95% opposed to a U.S. war.

Then the strains of the working class anthem, The Internationale, swept through the crowd. This display of working-class might helped force parliament to reject permission for the U.S. to use Turkey as a northern front into Iraq.

The active participation of the world's workers is crucial to the struggle against imperialist war. We need more actions like these, including work stoppages and walkouts, building to an international general strike. But that requires red leadership to break with the reformist union leaders who consider the imperialists of Paris, Berlin and Moscow as "peacemakers." ☛

EDITORIAL | Profit System Dictates Endless Wars

President George W. Bush just gave Saddam Hussein, French President Chirac and the whole world 48 hours to surrender. As you read this, the war might be on for control of Iraqi oil. His thuggish “diplomatic” maneuvering has isolated U.S. imperialism politically in a way unprecedented since the end of World War II. He holed himself up in the Azores, at a U.S. Air Force base in the Atlantic Ocean, with the prime ministers of England and Spain, the only two European powers he can either bribe or intimidate into playing along with his current war scenario. Recently, he suffered humiliating snubs from Turkey, Mexico and Canada, all countries that U.S. rulers used to command at a whim.

Meanwhile, the leaders of France, Germany and Russia are busy solidifying their own growing anti-U.S. coalition. Workers must draw an important lesson from these antics. Bush may go to war now. But a central law of imperialism is already operating. The nature of the profit system creates rivalries that no deal-making or negotiation can smooth over. These rivalries inevitably lead to war. The U.S. may be top dog now, but the rest of the world’s rulers can’t and won’t tolerate this domination indefinitely. The U.N. Security Council posturing and all the behind-the-scenes diplomatic scrambling merely provide cover for the deadly logic of a system based on the universal drive for maximum profit.

Contradictions Galore Between Washington and the Rest of the World

The threat of a U.S. oil war in Iraq has already sharpened every contradiction between Washington and the rest of the world’s bosses. War will speed this process. The U.S. drive to continue dominating the

world through control of Persian Gulf oil aims for full-scale occupation of the Middle East which would produce an ever-widening series of wars, eventually pitting the U.S. against a coalition of the other imperialists. This scenario may take years to unfold; brief periods of relative calm may occur amid the violence, but the general trend is toward war. Nothing can necessarily prevent it. But organizing to smash it once it starts is an entirely different matter.

Now and in the months and years ahead, workers have an excellent opportunity to build our forces. We face a long, difficult march. However, our future as a class remains bright. The march will eventually lead to communist revolution and working-class seizure of political power.

Millions around the world have demonstrated their hatred of U.S. imperialism, Bush and his war plans. As New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman ruefully writes (3/16), “George Bush has managed to lose a global popularity contest to Saddam Hussein.” On February 15, in every major city across the U.S., North America, Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere, “the United States government became the target of what was apparently the largest coordinated one-day popular protest in the history of the world.” Polls regularly show that most people consider the U.S. a “greater menace to peace and safety than Iraq.” (The New Yorker, 3/17).

Growing mass anger at Bush & Co. provides the raw material for political growth. But that won’t happen all by itself. We must fight to strengthen the mass hatred of imperialism, lead the fight against intensified racism — especially against Arab workers and fascist deportations — and show how the U.S. rulers’ war in Iraq is also a war against workers in the U.S.

and worldwide. Every bomb dropped on Iraqi workers is an attack on U.S. workers, both as class brothers and sisters as well the deepening of mass poverty here, increasing unemployment and destroying social services.

We make no distinction among members of the class enemy. We must expose the so-called “lesser-evil” capitalists. Bush is the obvious bad guy. Naturally we should help those who want to fight him, but opposing only the obvious enemy won’t get the job done. Far more dangerous than Bush are the liberal rulers, who pretend that imperialism offers alternatives to war or who scold Bush simply because of his inability to build a coalition for the present war.

Tactical Differences Between Bush Gang and Liberals

The differences between Bush and the liberals are purely tactical. They don’t disagree at all about the need to maintain U.S. dominance as a super-power, and they’re completely united in their desire to monopolize Persian Gulf oil. The differences concern the timing of the war and the extent to which either gang is prepared to bribe the French and Russian rulers with junior-partner Iraqi oil contracts.

For various reasons, Bush wants the war to start now. The liberals worry that an isolated U.S. may achieve easy initial victory in Iraq but will then get bogged down and overextended in a costly occupation with unpredictable dangers. And Iraq is just the beginning. As the Times warns (3/16), U.S. troops are likely to turn next to Iran. Even Iran is just another step in the U.S.’s strategic drive to lock in the entire region’s

energy treasure. So, reason the liberals, a few crumbs to Russian and French oil and gas moguls might not be such a bad idea. Bush just wants to bulldoze ahead without the niceties. Barhim Salih, whom Bush seems to have made a leading candidate to head a post-Saddam puppet government, threatens to punish the uncooperative French and Russians by not honoring “oil and gas contracts signed with the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq.” (UPI, 3/14)

On timing, the liberals’ chief mouthpiece, the New York Times editorializes (3/18) on the eve of war, “This page has never wavered in the belief that Mr. Hussein must be disarmed. Our problem is the wrongheaded way this administration has gone about it.”

This is liberal capitalist “realism:” debating how and when to wreak havoc on millions of Iraqi workers and their children and to place thousands of young working-class U.S.. British and Iraqi soldiers in harm’s way — all for the sake of the most ruthless, murderous system in world history.

The huge mobilizations against war have shown that masses of people have expressed ideas far more advanced than their leadership. As this war is unleashed, and as sentiment mounts against it, we must build on this and direct it against the entire system.

Bush is just one capitalist among many. The monster has a hundred heads. They must all be cut off. We need communism, not old capitalist poison in new bottles. Only the working class, led by the Progressive Labor Party, can accomplish this task. We’re pursuing these aims in the new anti-war movement. We can do much more. May Day 2003 will give us a good yardstick by which to judge our efforts and their results.☸

LIBERALS' WORRY: PRESENT GROUND FORCE NOT DEADLY ENOUGH

At the core of the liberals’ discontent with Bush’s war plans is their concern about his inadequate preparation for ground war. The New York Times quotes “military experts who are worried” about Defense Secretary Rumsfeld’s plan to attack before assembling a full complement of ground forces. At the moment, U.S. forces are more heavily weighted in favor of assault troops - the Nazi-style strike forces Rumsfeld openly envies and admires - than occupation troops. Much of the hardware needed for ground fighting has yet to be unloaded in Kuwait or even

shipped from U.S. ports. The Times (3/16) quotes a retired Marine general, Richard I. Neal, as warning: “You need enough forces to fight the war itself and sustain it.”

The foregoing should make clear that any of the liberals’ hesitation is not due to genuine anti-war sentiment. Just the opposite. With the Times as their mouthpiece, the liberals want the deadliest force possible. Their only gripe with Bush and Rumsfeld is that they’re acting too rashly and jeopardizing U.S. imperialism’s strategic goals.☸

'IF YOU MAKE ME KILL YOU, IT'S YOUR FAULT'

The hypocrisy of liberal rulers’ supposed “humanitarianism” appears boundless. Remember Clinton’s bombing the former Yugoslavia back to the Stone Age in 1999 to “save lives” or the U.S. officer’s remark about having to destroy a Vietnamese village “in order to save it?”

The Iraqi people are about to become the latest beneficiaries of this imperialist philanthropy. By now everyone knows that U.S.-imposed sanctions have killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, mostly children, since 1991. Now two leading lights at the Council on Foreign Relations, which until recently backed these sanctions to the hilt, have concocted a remarkably twisted rationale for abandoning them. According to Walter Russell Mead and Rachel Bronson, “sanctions exist only because...(of) Saddam Hussein.” These “scholars” point out that the

containment policy the sanctions supposedly support allows Saddam “to control the political climate of the Middle East....Worse, (it) forces the United States to keep large conventional forces in Saudi Arabia and the rest of the region.” Worse yet, “Osama bin Laden founded al Qaeda because U.S. forces stayed in Saudi Arabia.”

Mead and Bronson have a solution to reverse the “[destabilization] of the very countries [containment] aims to protect.” The solution is war. Of course, as Mead recognizes, “...war brings with it its own strategic problems and moral challenges.”

But what are a few “strategic problems” and moral scruples when there are trillions of dollars in oil profits to win and a world to dominate? “It is time for a change,” thunders Mead.

We agree. Our idea of change is called communist revolution.☸

(Sources: Washington Post, March 12; Newsday, March 15)

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

☸PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead,” capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of capitalism, like wages and divisions of labor.

☸Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

☸Communism means working collectively to build a society based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money

and profit. Everyone will share society’s benefits and burdens.

☸Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

☸Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

☸Communism means abolishing nations which leads to nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☸Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers, eventually everyone must become communist organizers.

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Clinton's 'Reform': Welfare-To-Work Becomes Welfare-to-Jobless

Clinton's welfare "reform" was supposed to move workers on welfare to seek jobs. But a nasty thing got in the way — capitalism.

The "prosperity" of the 1990s never reached tens of millions, especially those living below the poverty line. But the welfare rolls kept declining. Most who found work ended up in minimum wage jobs. But the inevitable recession/depression of capitalism's business cycle hit with a vengeance. As the Wall Street Journal said (3/11), the job market is tough for everyone now, but "hiring prospects are even more grim for welfare recipients." This is particularly true in a war econ-

"Even if they had job skills right now, what we'd then have is better-educated unemployed people."

omy where the drive to finance the military leads to cuts in vital social services and mass layoffs.

Clinton signed the "reform" law in 1996, mandating state cut-offs for welfare in five years. Meanwhile, in the last two years over two million jobs disappeared. An official of the Saginaw Valley Rehabilitation Center (Mich.) that tries to help welfare recipients said, "We couldn't bribe an employer into hiring right now."

With unemployment approaching 20 million (see CHALLENGE, 3/5), former welfare recipients who are now excluded from benefits must compete with laid-

off workers with more experience, who have fewer child-care problems and more access to transportation. The early corporate "backers" of welfare-to-work policies have disappeared as capitalism's economic crisis catches up with them. United Airlines dropped out in 2000 and is now in bankruptcy proceedings.

Since Ohio's welfare cutoff in 2000, nearly 16,000 families have been slashed from state welfare rolls, while nearly 200,000 jobs have been lost in the state. "Even if they had job skills right now," said a senior researcher at the Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland, "what we'd then have is better-educated unemployed people."

Those like Jesse Jackson and the liberal reformers who PUSH education as the solution to poverty and unemployment are essentially apologists for capitalism. Karl Marx pointed out over 150 years ago that the profit system must have a "reserve army of the unemployed," even if one has a decent education. Capitalism breeds unemployment. And because of racism, black and Latin suffer a jobless rate twice that of white workers. Only the



communist society that Marx advocated can solve unemployment and the other horrors of capitalism. Without profits and with workers in control, we well collectively reap all that we produce and distribute it according to need. ☺

Union Deals With Gov. and Bosses Cut Heart Out of Health Care System

NEW YORK CITY, March 11 — On March 3, hundreds of workers from Local 1199, SEIU, met here to plan a fight-back against Gov. Pataki's proposals to slash \$2 billion from the health care industry, mostly in Medicaid funding.

The union leadership had endorsed Pataki in the last election in exchange for small raises workers received in their last union contract. Proposed layoffs will wipe away these increases. The love affair between the union leadership and Pataki was short lived. Now politicians, from NYC Mayor Bloomberg to county leaders across the state, are demanding Albany rein in Medicaid costs. Actually Pataki could solve the budget shortfall by raising taxes on the rich and closing corporate tax loopholes. But that runs counter to bosses' profits.

As one worker declared, "The politicians and bosses must be held accountable for any workers' deaths and layoffs as a result of these cuts."

A massive rally is planned for April 1 in Albany, the state capital. A coalition with hospital management to lobby the politicians against the cuts is being formed. At the meeting, several workers opposed uniting with hospital management and relying on politicians. This would mislead workers to depend on their class enemies, the hospital bosses, politicians and the rich who all represent capitalism's profit system.

The bosses have already started cutting jobs, including 200 after the closing of Caledonia Hospital. The bosses always find new ways to increase profits, even without these cuts — heavier workloads on an already over-burdened and short-staffed workforce; cross-training more workers; and shortening patients' hospital stays.

Pataki is resisting taxing the rich, saying

it will "drive jobs out of the state." But his proposals will drive thousands of workers onto the unemployment lines. The proposed cuts will cause misery, pain and suffering for the working class. For every dollar Albany cuts from Medicaid, Washington would cut \$2.

Right now Medicaid assists those who need it most: the disabled, elderly and poor families. Medicaid cuts will drastically reduce hospital reimbursements, jeopardizing thousands of hospital jobs, eliminating rehabilitation services and reducing home-care services.

These cuts are racist. NYC's health care workers are mostly black and Latin. These workers already suffer a high unemployment rate. With still higher joblessness and less health services, more diseases will spread through these communities.

The State's 50,000 home health care workers make between \$8 and \$10 per hour, barely enough to survive. Pataki's plan will wreak havoc with their lives and devastate the sick, the elderly and the disabled for whom they care.

All this is due to U.S. capitalism and is intensified by the Bush administration's budget proposals and war plans, causing huge cuts in social services and other vital programs. Meanwhile, hundreds of billions of workers' taxes are spent for a war to maintain control of Mid-Eastern oil, which will ravage the health of, and kill, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi workers and children.

Capitalism's racist health system cannot meet the needs of workers and patients nor provide preventative measures against illness. Only under communism — with no bosses, politicians or rich rulers — can the working class live long, healthy, productive lives. ☺

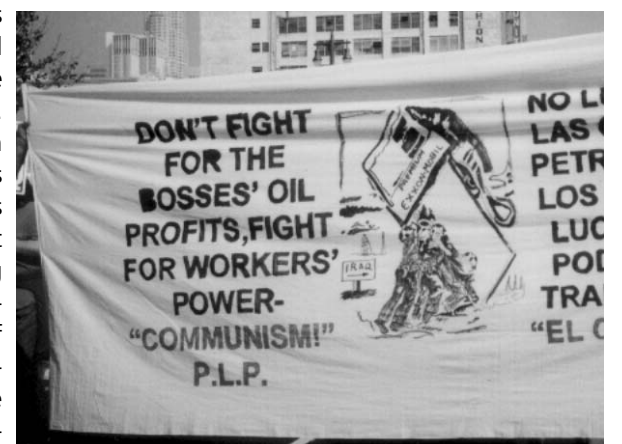
Campus Workers' Struggle Leads to Anti-War Caucus

Millions of workers worldwide have joined marches protesting the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Petitions have been signed, phone networks developed, teach-ins held. It's important that PLP members be among those workers, spreading the winning ideas of revolutionary communism, to combat the cynicism when marching and chanting do not stop Bush & Co. from murdering masses of Iraqis and others.

In the largest union on our West Coast campus, some rank-and-file leaders wrote an anti-war resolution in January, to convince the local to take a firm stand against the war. Although a lower leadership body passed it, it lost in the Executive Board. They said they had to maintain neutrality since not everyone in the union was against the war. Some workers argued there's no neutrality on this issue. If you don't actively oppose the war, then you're complicit in supporting it.

Some members were angry because there hadn't been more support from our union leadership. One nominated a Party member for an opening on the Executive Council. Although he was hesitant, the Party club decided that, whether he won or lost, this offered an opportunity to raise issues the union might otherwise ignore.

The nominations and voting



occurred at a small leadership meeting later that week. The two candidates were asked to speak. The PL member raised broader issues — the fight against racism, police brutality, for immigrant rights, etc. He received 40% of the votes. A number of people congratulated him, saying, "We'll do better next time."

This confidence of his co-workers has enabled him to organize an anti-war caucus in the union, which scheduled its second meeting in mid-March. This is an opportunity to discuss many political issues and move workers further left. It's important to make clear that more than marching is needed to stop the imperialists' war drive. War is one of the main ways they maintain their wretched system.

We must ensure that caucus members read and discuss CHALLENGE. As capitalism exposes itself, workers will become increasingly disgusted, which will help them grasp communist ideas. ☺

Rally to Hit California Governor's Racist Cuts



LOS ANGELES, March 17 — “Did you know they’re laying off all our night-time counselors and may cancel all summer classes?” a student exclaimed. “We need all the help we can get!”

Students and faculty in the community colleges here are rallying on March 28 to protest the devastating budget cuts proposed by Governor Gray Davis. The \$274 million cut from the 2002-2003 budget has already cancelled hundreds of classes, dumped part-time instructors and closed out thousands of students from courses needed for graduation. Funding for 2003-2004 will be even lower, while student fees would more

than double.

These attacks are racist, sexist, and anti-working class because community college students have a heavy proportion of:

- Recent immigrants in ESL programs;
- Black, Latino and white working class students trying to make it to a university in the face of a racist education they received in school
- those seeking a trade to become a skilled worker or paraprofessional;
- Youth who can’t afford to go directly to a four-year college; and,
- Women returning to school while raising a family.

Their aspirations are under attack from a capitalist system intent on solving the bosses’ budget crisis on the backs of the working class. The state budget crisis is real and likely to worsen. Federal funds for education are drying up as \$1.9 TRILLION finances a war to destroy,

occupy and control Iraq. California plans to borrow as much as \$11 million in June, partly to make payments on another \$12.5 billion borrowed last year. Energy price gouging and a \$5.27 billion prison-building spree have worsened conditions still further. In fact the prison budget is the ONLY one that Davis is NOT planning to cut! Nor will he release thousands of black and Latin youth who shouldn’t be in prison in the first place, or declare a moratorium on debt payments to bankers in order to maintain workers’ education and health care. As fascist “homeland security” intensifies, and U.S. imperialism is increasingly challenged by rival imperialists, this crisis will deepen.

The current union leadership denounces the budget cuts in marches and press conferences. But teachers and students need to link the cuts to the war for oil and to prison growth, organizing a serious fight against them.

The Faculty Association of the Cali-

fornia Community Colleges say the cuts should be “shared more equally” between the different levels of education. But that’s self-defeating, giving in to the cuts. We need to build unity among all teachers, students and parents against these attacks, at all educational levels. We must place the blame for the cuts squarely on Davis (a Democrat) as well as on Congress and Bush, on a capitalist system hell-bent on war and building a police state. Teachers should not fight each other over where to cut education. No level should be slashed to fuel the war machine.

For the first time many are stepping forward as active participants, organizers and leaders in this struggle. Some are starting to question the very nature of a system that cannot meet their needs but instead builds more prisons and sends their friends to a bosses’ war for oil.

Students Angry Over Oil War, School Cutbacks

HYATTSVILLE, MD., March 5 — Over 800 students at North-western High School crowded into the auditorium for a teach-in against war in Iraq. Entire classes and many individual students joined the call for a “Student Strike against the War.” Energy was high as students streamed into a slide show about worldwide protests, with music from Bob Marley, Tracy Chapman, and Tupac Shakur. (“Stand Up for Your Rights,” “Talkin’ About a Revolution,” “Changes”)

Speakers explained that the U.S. invasion aims to control Iraq’s oil fields for U.S. corporate profit and control of oil distribution to China and Japan. Students were angry over cutbacks in the school’s health center, books and teachers’ salaries. One speaker said millions were being spent for war every 10 seconds. The local county council chairman said he was against this war and that students here, not Bush’s children, would be fighting in it. Two students read a poem and were cheered when saying “Stop feeding the rich, start feeding the poor!” Half the auditorium was ringed with 5-foot-tall pictures of Iraqi people. Hundreds joined the last speaker in chanting, “Move Bush! Get Out the Way, Get Out the Way Bush!”

Students had been passing out red armbands for a week and had originally planned a walkout and picketing. However, they agreed to the principal’s offer of the auditorium instead. This was partly due to threats of suspension and arrests if they walked out. Then, on the day of the event he refused to allow outside speakers, except for the Democratic councilman who tried to direct the students’ militancy toward the ballot box.

The students were upset but well prepared. The event reached many more students than expected. Students saw they could rely on themselves instead of “experts.” They also learned that, as the struggle intensifies, administrators are not to be trusted. The next day they found that their absence was unexcused, a lesson for the future.

Elsewhere in the Washington area 300 Blair H.S. students walked out when Tom Ridge came to offer money for “Homeland Security.” Other students staged smaller protests led by Peace and Justice groups which emphasized moralistic and pacifist views.

Northwestern students have a sharper and more militant analysis, in great part because of connections with PLP. The most advanced students and experienced adults must develop closer ties and start study groups among the many who’ve come forward in this anti-war movement. We need to strengthen student understanding of the necessity for communist revolution and class struggle and smash imperialist warmakers once and for all.☸



Political Anti-War Message Rings A Bell Among Many GIs

In the Vietnam War, over 500,000 GI’s deserted, refusing to fight Vietnamese workers and peasants. Using grenades, they “fragg’d” their officers who ordered them into combat. Sailors sabotaged six aircraft carriers, forcing them back to the U.S. This is what created the Vietnam Syndrome, leading a Marine colonel/historian to describe it as “The Collapse of the U.S. Army.” Many GI’s in today’s “professional army” can be won to oppose imperialist war. Witness the following from the N.Y. Daily News, March 16.

Al Jaber Air Base, Kuwait — Many of the U.S. troops poised for battle here would give peace a chance if they had a choice. Doubts about going to war can be heard openly in conversations among the troops at night....

Several military chaplains...said airmen, sailors, Marines and soldiers...have shared the same misgivings in private sessions....The kick-butt attitude appears to be dominant. But even those most eager for combat tend to allow that their disagreeing buddies have valid points about what they sarcastically call a “do-over war,” meaning that they would be finishing a job left undone by then-President George Bush in 1991.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Michael Barber, a Catholic chaplain....told of a fighter pilot who sought counsel “not just about his personal fears, but about the prospect of killing innocent civilians. And then there’s that Iraqi conscript who bears us no ill will. His crime would be that he was born Iraqi....”

Barber said the political anti-war message...[has] resonated with many....Even some of the officers are wondering — if it was up to them, they wouldn’t have this war.☸

Transit Workers Hail Student Solidarity Against War

March 5 — “The budget cuts are screwing us all — and it’s all because of this damn war for oil,” exclaimed a transit worker to several students from a state university in California. He said his son attends our college and is suffering from the recent tuition increase. He explained that he used to feel lucky to have his transit job because he was recently laid off from Boeing due to cutbacks. But now the bosses are trying to jam a horrible contract down transit workers’ throats because of the budget cuts.

Another transit worker welcomed us, saying, “We’re glad you came to pass out anti-war flyers because many of us are also against the war.”

Earlier we rallied at a busy intersection near our campus, displaying banners and chanting anti-war slogans as thousands of cars passed on their way to work and school. Many, including truck drivers, honked their horns in support. The rally’s energy and positive reception inspired us to march through campus, shouting, “1,2,3,4, we don’t want your oil war! 5,6,7,8, don’t recruit us for your hate!” We marched through buildings and past classrooms encouraging students to walk out to protest the upcoming war.

Several students and professors joined as we strode to the ROTC building.

Moving several students to take the anti-war sentiments to the transit workers was an advance, leading to ideas about how to really block imperialist war. We discussed the power workers have to stop military production, about how a transit strike could encourage dockworkers (angry about their contract) to strike against the war. Dockers could follow their brother workers in England and refuse to load military equipment onto ships bound for the Persian Gulf. We discussed the need to stand in solidarity with striking workers everywhere.

Rallies and marches are useful in showing our dissent, but they will not stop imperialist war. Doing the hard, day-to-day organizing of workers and working-class students against the capitalist system will, in the long run, lead to revolution and end imperialist war. Connecting the war on Iraq and the budget cuts in health care, education and jobs to the bosses’ relentless drive for profit, can help workers understand they have no interest in maintaining this system.☸

OPPOSE LIBERAL POL PREACHING WAR DRAFT

I belong to a church in a large city. Recently the pastors invited a liberal congressman to address the congregation about his "anti-war work in Congress" and his bill to "re-instate the draft as an anti-war tactic." CNN filmed his appearance.

The Congressman reviewed his opposition to the war on Iraq, outlining familiar Democratic Party themes regarding timing and planning. He even said Iraq's oil is the main reason for war because people here are "over-consumers of oil" and because the U.S. wants to control oil prices. He said the U.S. should get on Korea's case instead because they're "the really bad guys." He then painted a picture of Bush as a "born again" Christian who isn't thinking right, a bit loony.

His championed the draft because most soldiers volunteer for economic reasons, making the military disproportionately black, Latin and poor — indisputably true. He paraded his credentials as a Civil Rights leader and a Korean War veteran. Riding on the back of the

anti-war movement, he congratulated the efforts of "the people's movement" and said we shouldn't give up on "our great country."

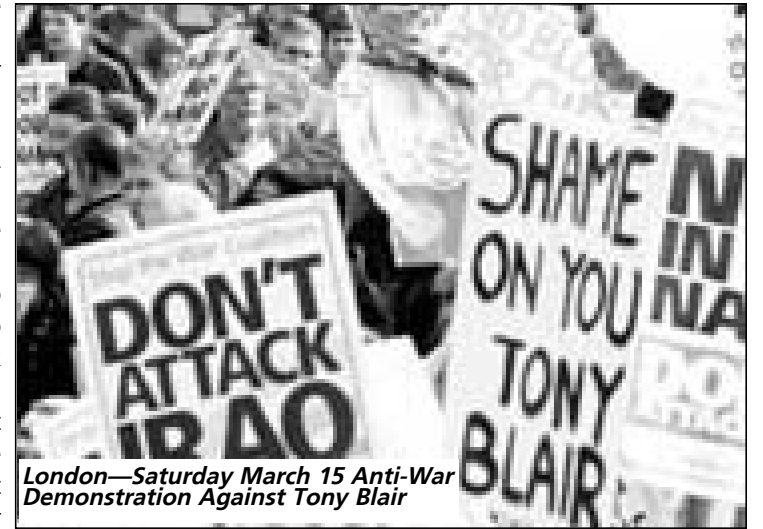
He was slick, clearly showing how the Democratic Party is positioning itself at the head of the anti-war movement, in order to control and direct it ideologically. He was applauded, but challenged as well. When a friend and I held up a "Stop War on Iraq" banner, the pastor admonished us that this was "a house of worship." We held it up anyway.

During the question and answer period several people opposed the draft proposal as an anti-war tactic. Another said that historically the elite never served. Still another said the brains behind Bush's policy were often Democrats. I said that, "For any administration the conquest of oil and empire defines U.S. political strategy for world domination. The Jan. 5 New York Times magazine section published an article by Michael Ignatieff entitled, 'The American Empire: Get Used to It.' Today it's Iraq. Tomorrow may be Saudi Arabia, Iran,

Pakistan and the Philippines. And eventually larger conflict with competing empires, European and Asian, raising the specter of World War III. I have two questions: 1) Do you really think the elite will serve? 2) Won't the draft serve U.S. strategy as it seeks a larger pool of working-class soldiers it needs not only to pursue its far-flung empire but also to militarize U.S. society under Homeland Security?"

The Congressman ignored my questions, saying people should keep doing what they're doing and as well as register to vote and participate in elections.

Afterwards a friend told me we need to "re-define patriotism." That led to a discussion about how it's impossible to be patriotic to the capitalist system. Other friends there are in a study group that's discussing imperialism, the role of the liberals in the anti-war movement and the necessity for revolution as the only way to end imperialist war. The strengths and weaknesses of socialism



London—Saturday March 15 Anti-War Demonstration Against Tony Blair

historically and what communism will mean, have been front and center. These friends heard and discussed my questions before the event.

Over half the members of the church are against the war; the majority of these are committed to liberal ideology. Some of us have participated together in forums, marches and conferences over the past two years. We have plans for what to do when the war starts. Little by little I'm introducing a communist analysis and making a few good friends. The opportunities are growing, but patience and persistence are still required.

Youth Club's Stepped-Up Activity Leads to Growth

SEATTLE, WA, March 9 — In the last several months there have been the most massive demonstrations — against war — taking place in the streets here since the 1999 World Trade Organization meeting. Our youth club has been out in the rain distributing leaflets and CHALLENGES at least once or twice a month since early January, leading to new contacts or friends joining our meetings. We are trying to make the most of our potential. But we also understand the limits of these demonstrations. They haven't stopped the push towards war and never will as long as the bosses do not face an international working class under the leadership of an organized party fighting for the dictatorship of the proletariat. As the growing anti-war movement gets dragged further under the thumb of the liberal Democrats, our work in the schools and on the job is the main tool to fight imperialist wars.

In line with this, we are organizing

D.C. Marchers Hear Class Analysis Exposing ALL Bosses

WASHINGTON, DC, March 15—Today, about 50,000 people marched against the war in Iraq. A small number of Party members and friends organized a rally on the edge of the protest to provide an alternative to the reformist and opportunist misleadership of the main march. We pointed out that a life-long commitment to revolutionary struggle was needed because imperialism creates endless wars, not just this one. We pointed out that, had Gore taken office, we would most likely still be in the same situation. We also criticized the notion that France was moral. (Quite a few people held signs saying "Vive La France" because Chirac, France's leader, has attacked Bush for his invasion plans). We stated that the French bosses just wanted as big a piece of the oil action as they could get, and if the US occupies Iraq, they will be cut out and once again a vassal of the U.S. So it's all about battles among imperialists—we have no "friends in high places" in any imperialist country! With struggle, we will see more signs like the one that said, "Soldiers turn your guns around!"

Lots of marchers picked up our revolutionary chants, gave us strong support, and received over 100 Challenges and 2500 leaflets. Several contacts were made for future struggle. And it will intensify!☺

study groups with our friends and inside mass organizations. For example, one member has arranged to give two talks on her campus to a local chapter of Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MeCha), entitled War in Iraq and The History of Communism. Another comrade is active in an anti-war organization in his neighborhood. Other youth have attended our club meetings from both of these groups as well as from comrades' circles of friends.

The only way we can win is to discuss our ideas with as many people as possible. But quality is primary. Our base of friends must develop a comprehensive understanding of capitalism. Without it the numbers we attract mean very little. Our club itself has grown. This gives us more hope that we will be able to influence the millions demonstrating in the streets.☺

Berkeley Anti-War Marchers Reach Out To Workers

BERKELEY, CA, March 5 — In solidarity with students around the country, PLP members participated in a lunchtime walkout held at UCal-Berkeley today. At least half of the 150 protesters were high school students who braved suspension to be there. They added real energy, making up for the lackluster leadership of the Berkeley Stop the War Coalition who said that two walkouts — the second set for the day the bombing starts — were "too much." Fortunately these high school students felt differently.

PLP members and friends struggled to build a larger event and attempted to include workers, especially campus workers. After the rally, we marched to various campus buildings, including Cory Hall where the crowd chanted, "University of mass destruction! Shut it down! Shut it down!" A speaker explained that the Electronics Research Lab was given \$60 million dollars in military grants for weapons designs.

During the march we sold CHALLENGE, created signs, distributed flyers and had productive talks with college and high school students. Our anti-war, anti-imperialist message was well received and

brought a number of contacts.

We're trying to join students and workers in the anti-war movement, bringing workers to the anti-war meetings and anti-war students to the workplaces. In classes we've called on students to reach out to campus workers and to those in industries like transit, indicating that a successful anti-war movement must base itself on the tremendous power workers represent. Workers are definitely open to these messages, as seen at a recent social workers' conference organized for social justice.

We're also linking the fight against imperialist war with an attack on openly fascist elements. Students recently disrupted a forum entitled, "Why the Left Hates America" held by the Young Conservatives Foundation. By broadening the politics of the anti-war movement beyond the narrow vision of "peace" under capitalism, we can bring our friends to realize that revolution is the logical solution to these inter-related struggles.☺

YOUTH RAISE RED BANNERS

LOS ANGELES, March 15 — Constant rain did not dampen the spirits of marchers here, protesting the war in Iraq. Youth in the PLP contingent waved red banners of workers' revolutionary communist internationalism throughout the march. When they chanted "Same Enemy, Same Fight! Workers of the World Unite!" and "Las Luchas Obreras no Tienen Fronteras," workers in the adjacent union contingents joined in.

LETTERS

"We must unite the world's workers and allies to turn this imperialist war into a revolutionary upsurge to destroy capitalism and build a communist society where workers rule."

—Red Worker, Colombia

CHALLENGE Spreads 'The Word' . . .

Can we doubt Iraq will be bombed and invaded? By the time you read this it may have begun. In our interfaith coalition we're trying to battle the illusion that imperial butchery can be prevented merely by demonstrations. We also want to plan a vigorous response as soon as the war moves to the next level (it's being going on since January, 1991).

On Ash Wednesday (beginning the Christian season of reflection and growth called Lent) we're picketing our liberal Democratic Party warmongering Senator's offices. One poster reads, "Does the concept 'Recall Vote' get your attention?" This is one proposed organizing tool for the coming war.

Once a month my parish is holding a "Study-Action Evening." Last month was "Savage Inequalities," a discussion of how racism lies at the basis of all oppression and imperialist conquest. This month, "Is the U.S. the New Evil Empire" will try to understand how the Iraqi slaughter is not just for cheap domestic oil consumption, but also for economic, political and military world domination. We're reading, "The Grand Chessboard," Democratic policy advisor Brzezinski's road map for U.S. imperialist design. We will plan class struggle at every session and review the progress of one of our new members against racist gentrification in a neighboring building.

The main thing is the Party is growing, modestly. We have regular club meetings and discuss CHALLENGE editorials and articles. I select 10 or so difficult and political "key words" in the editorial for each meeting. We learn them and discuss how they are tied to the Party's line. Then we take turns reading and discussing the editorial, paragraph by paragraph. Little by little, members and friends are developing a broader and deeper understanding of the Party's ideas. They are seeing CHALLENGE as an organizing tool for political struggle and circulating it at mass anti-war actions. One member takes an additional paper for her brother who is a truck driver. We are scheduling our next meeting at her apartment to suit his schedule.

We also discuss how to raise the Party's ideas in a mass-distributed church journal. Our last interfaith conference expanded the circulation by 300 and a national conference produced an additional 150 addresses of people who do anti-racist organizing in inner city parishes around the country.

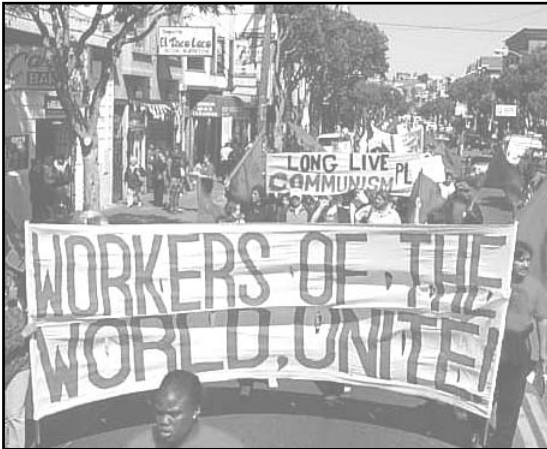
I also met with my old college roommate who I thought would never organize anything. Sharpening world events have led him to become active in our denominational national peace fellowship. He's writing a piece for the journal debating me about whether UN Security Council approval means anything amid U.S. imperialist war. Even this pacifist lawyer can be won closer to PL! The horrors of U.S. empire building are opening up new opportunities in churches and communities to recruit new comrades!

Gnawing away in struggle, Red Churchmouse

. . .Crucial to Class Struggle

I want to add one point to the excellent article "Challenge Crucial to Revolutionary Consciousness" (3/19). It says:

"The coming war is both a great danger



and a greater opportunity. Millions of workers and young people opposing U.S. imperialism can be won to becoming revolutionary communists. In order to win them, we must have a mass readership for CHALLENGE. Every anti-war rally should be viewed as another chance to spread mass communist consciousness through CHALLENGE. This struggle will be won or lost based on the commitment and understanding of workers and our young comrades and friends. Their efforts will make the difference."

The importance of mobilizing the Party, and particularly the young comrades, to distribute CHALLENGE at mass anti-war rallies can't be overstated. Many current PLP leaders were trained through our activity in SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) and the Vietnam anti-war movement, and the rebellions against racist police brutality when PLP and our allies in Canada and other areas grew by 15 or 20 times in size. At one point during the 1970s we were selling 100,000 CHALLENGES per month, mostly in street sales.

One reason we grew significantly then was because of our activity in many struggles which linked imperialist war to local issues. Today we also use another important method of increasing the mass local readership of CHALLENGE — distribution among our friends within the many mass organizations that our members are part of. Increasing these efforts could enable our Party to have a profound effect on the millions now in motion against the war. What if multi-racial groups of scores of workers under our political leadership, chanting our slogans, began challenging the liberal and phony "left" leadership of the anti-war movement? This could influence hundreds of thousands of honest anti-war forces worldwide.

We estimate there is a greater openness to our ideas than at any time in the recent past. We must take advantage of this situation, pushing harder for regular CHALLENGE discussion groups or PLP study groups. This could lead to more commitment by our friends and new members to the mass distribution of CHALLENGE. In turn, this could lead to greater worldwide growth of PLP.

Longtime Reader

U.S. Sponsors Mass Terror In Colombia

A peasant in Santa Ana (Araucanía) had his home burned to the ground by an anti-guerrilla army group which accused him of being a guerrilla. "The soldiers told us to get out of the way, that the house was going to be set afire," said a neighbor who fled the area with her little baby. "They threw gasoline and everything blew up." The burnt-out peasant said he fears denouncing the soldiers because, "If we do they accuse us of being a guerrilla sympa-

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thizer and treat us very badly. If we don't keep quiet one might end up dead. We barely earn enough to eat and buy medicine for malaria, which is widespread here."

Two months ago an entire family, including two young children, had their heads cut off. This is part of a mass uprooting of poor families by land-grabbing cattle owners and drug-dealing landlords, backed by fascist paramilitary gangs who murder those who don't move.

Some months ago the army surrounded Saravena and jailed 5,000 people for "investigation." One hundred were kept in jail suspected of "subversion." "It resembled a World War II movie showing fascist atrocities committed by the Nazis," said a local resident.

In the Comuna 13 district in Medellín, the army launched two military operations with U.S.-supplied tanks and helicopter gunships, killing 50 and jailing thousands as "suspected guerrillas." Many families were forced to flee their homes, leaving everything behind. When they returned they found their homes turned into barracks for the paramilitary death squads.

In poor working-class neighborhoods of Bogotá, Cali and many other cities, a so-called "census" is accompanied by military raids, arrests and mass disappearances. The army claims to have carried out over 50,000 "voluntary raids." But everyone knows what could happen if you don't accept it "voluntarily."

This mass terror has occurred for decades, but lately it's been even more intense due to the fascist "Fight Against Terrorism" of Bush's buddy, President Alvaro Uribe. Generals are ordered to produce "results," putting the entire population under siege — fascism under the guise of "protecting democracy from terrorism." On top of that, workers are suffering from the worldwide capitalist crisis with mounting unemployment and hunger.

PLP considers this local war part of the international class war imperialists are waging against workers to redivide the world's resources and wealth. We must unite the world's workers and allies to turn this imperialist war into a revolutionary upsurge to destroy capitalism and build a communist society where workers rule.

Red Worker, Colombia

'Billions For War, \$0 For Jobless'

On January 18, a group of people from our high school and other schools participated in the Washington, D.C. protest against a war in Iraq and to fight for equality. We met tens of thousands willing to protest, more than we could imagine — African-Americans, Caucasians, Muslims, Latino, Jewish people and others. People carried different signs, such as: "War is not the solution"; "Profit prevents peace";

"You have billions for war but \$0 for the jobless."

U.S. imperialism wants war for control of oil profits. Workers and their families suffer in Iraq as well as in the U.S., from the soldiers who fight the wars, to the many thousands of innocent working-class people who will die. Billions of these dollars should be used for poor people, workers, immigrants and the homeless. This imperialist war could lead to World War III and a possible nuclear war.

We will continue protesting and studying this issue to learn more about changing the world. We need a new system and new leaders.

The NYC Revolutionary Youth Knights

Protest 'REDucate' NYC Youth

In February, some teachers at our high school who were very concerned about war in Iraq organized an assembly for several classes to discuss it. Speakers represent the views of Bush, Saddam Hussein and the "no war" position. A student friend who'd been to some anti-war protests was invited to present her view. She said students had to evaluate what they saw at these protests — just blaming Bush or supporting war if the U.N. backed it, didn't make sense. On the other hand, slogans like, "No workers' blood for oil profits," and "A war budget leaves every child behind," made lots of sense. She concluded by calling for a student peace club that would involve more students in the movement.

One friend asked why nobody else had mentioned oil. Then everybody jumped to explain about oil, but they'd already been exposed. One teacher disagreed with the "no war" speaker calling soldiers and ROTC members "trained killers." Someone said soldiers are also thinking people who are trying to figure out what to do. She gave several examples from World War I and the Vietnam War of soldiers fraternizing with the so-called "enemy" and refusing their officers' orders. She said many of us have friends and family members in the military and that we should start a pen pal club with them, because they must be really having a hard time now.

After this assembly we organized the peace club. On March 5, when many schools had strikes and walk-outs, we had a picket line before school with 35 students and 15 teachers. Some of us went together to the March 15 demonstration and are planning more activities. We know from watching Bush on TV that by the time CHALLENGE comes out the war will probably be on. We will also have had more protests against it.

Some people probably thought that if the protests were big enough, there wouldn't be a war. They can see by now it didn't happen that way. We have a job to do within the student club at our school and in the movement in general to help others see that wars for profits are inevitable under capitalism — that it's not just Bush but the whole capitalist system — and that we can and must organize a revolutionary movement to put an end to capitalist wars for oil profits. The sooner the better.

A student comrade

continued on next page

MORE LETTERS

NY Student Walkout Denounces Oil War

I attended the March 5 youth anti-war rally in New York City with two dozen students from my school. It was very exciting. Thousands of high school students from around the city converged on Union Square. They had either refused to go to school that day or walked out of dozens of high schools in order to be at the noon-time rally. Scores of students — black, Latino, Asian and white — eloquently denounced the planned invasion of Iraq, calling it “a war for oil, a war for profits.”

Speaker after speaker explained how this imperialist war would not only kill our brothers and sisters in Iraq, but also would take money from our already underfunded schools. City University students are being threatened with a 40% tuition increase. Huge budget cuts loom for NYC public schools. Yet the ruling class is willing to commit hundreds of billions of tax dollars to seize Iraq and control Persian Gulf oil. Many speakers said that the cops who threaten to arrest students if they try to march have a long history of brutalizing and murdering black and Latino workers like Amadou Diallo.

In my school, students organized for the rally by distributing sign-up sheets asking students to commit themselves to attending. The halls were buzzing with talk about “striking against the war.” An Anti-War Faculty Committee will have its first meeting on March 12, a day when U.S. Labor Against The War has called for workplace anti-war activities.

At the rally we passed out copies of the PLP pamphlet against the war. It got a great reception. Thousands of students now consider themselves anti-war activists and are serious about learning more about the roots of an interventionist U.S. foreign policy. They’re open to PLP’s explanation of imperialist war as a natural outgrowth of capitalism, and to working toward the day when that system is part of our study of ancient history.

High School Red

Boeing Speed-up Behind Shuttle Blow Up

CHALLENGE was right — again. A Feb. 19

front-page article on the Columbia Shuttle disaster said the explosion was caused by the drive for maximum profits and that the whole shuttle program was a military operation. “That’s the nature of capitalism in this day and age,” it concluded, “everything is militarized for the endless wars the U.S. imperialists are planning in order to rule the world.”

Now the Washington Post (3/3) admits as much in an article entitled “NASA’s Culture of Certainty: Debate Was Muffled On Risks to Shuttle.”

“The agency [NASA] unquestioningly accepted [a fatally flawed] technical analyses [on damage sustained during lift-off] done by a contractor with a huge financial stake in the shuttle’s success.”

Boeing was that contractor. Those of us working in Boeing’s commercial plants are well aware of the company’s plans to implement “self-inspection” — a process riddled with conflicts of interest designed to get the parts produced faster. You could call it the “NASA inspection plan comes to commercial aircraft production.”

Even more revealing, Boeing CEO Phil Condit told CNN’s Lou Dobbs that the company has no intention of exiting the space business—no matter what the cost in lives or money. “*From the military side* (my emphasis), we are absolutely convinced that space-based [activities] are a critical element of our strategy and we have to be there,” said Condit.

He’s worried about the competition. For instance, Greece’s Defense Minister Yian-nos Papantoniou called for “European companies [to] develop the sort of scale they need to take on the American defense industry.” The European Union Commission has responded, “just before the possible outbreak of a Middle East war, by approving plans to set up a pan-European armaments [procurement] agency,” similar to DARPA, the U.S. counterpart. (Dow Jones, 3/10) The bosses know more is at stake here than market share.

The International Association of Machinists is goose-stepping right behind the imperialists. Last month our union leadership railroaded resolutions in favor of “missile defense.” This month they maneuvered to block a resolution against the Iraq war signed by more than a dozen rank-and-file workers — including many Vietnam veterans.

Millions are looking for an alternative to

the bosses’ press and its war propaganda. Let’s offer them CHALLENGE! You can’t do better!

Boeing worker

Students Need To Take Leadership

About 1,500 people at my college attended a March 5 teach-in against the war. Afterwards, 300 joined a rally called by Books Not Bombs, a student anti-war group. There, high school students from throughout the city spoke about risking suspension or other punishments for walking out of class. Then we marched, chanting, “ExxonMobil, BP, Shell - Take Your War and Go to Hell!” These events exposed the bosses’ lie that there’s overwhelming support for this war. But the events on my campus exposed some critical weaknesses in the anti-war movement.

For example, , the main speakers at our teach-in were professors; students mostly just introduced them. One student even said he “wasn’t here to talk about politics. That’s what the professors are here for.”

Capitalist ideology discourages all workers and students, especially youth, from analyzing politics critically. Students are directed to sit passively while “knowledge” is handed down to them from teachers. Communists believe all workers are equally capable of analyzing political situations and should be urged to do so. Youth should not only be encouraged to understand politics, but also to take positions of leadership within organizations to put those political ideas into action. At a meeting of the teach-in organizers, I suggested that students lead the next event. Many students agreed, but there will be more struggles to convince my classmates that we can discuss politics without a professor.

Another political weakness was the group’s lack of political ideology. We’re only against “this war.” This led to having an anti-war leaflet on our literature table written by the racist Pat Buchanan. He opposes the war not because it’s an imperialist war for control of oil, but because it involves America getting involved with “alien societies.” In the same leaflet Buchanan calls the Vietnam War a “heroic struggle, which bought ten years of freedom for Southeast Asia.”

The struggle against this opportunism led to the creation of a committee to work on the group’s “line.” This is an advance because it’s made political ideology more of a central idea. Our continued work in the

group will attempt to bring up ideas of multi-racial unity and communist revolution.

A Comrade

Vietnam Vets Know the Score

I had coffee with two Vietnam vets recently at an anti-war forum at the medical center where I work. One of them got pissed off and walked out after somebody covered up the US flag. These guys had a pretty good analysis on the Iraq war, exposing one government lie after another. “Can you believe Bush and Cheney already let a contract to some company to rebuild Iraq? The damn war hasn’t even started yet!” “Who got it, Haliburton?” I asked. We all had a good laugh.

They’d been in Vietnam during the Tet offensive, about the time I was finishing my college pre-med courses. I told them how I started to understand the economic cause of that war and got swept up in the anti-war and anti-racist movements sprouting everywhere. I told them the part of the movement that had impressed me most was the Worker Student Alliance within SDS. “They didn’t tell people to dodge the draft. They said if you were really against the war you should join the army and help organize rebellions.”

“Yeah, I know,” said the one who had been pissed about the flag. He seemed to have the most understanding of all the political/economic connections. His friend introduced him as the person in charge of research for their veterans’ group. “I got into it with one of those SDS guys and beat him up,” he said After pausing he added, “I’d like to see those guys again. I would tell them they were right.”

“Funny thing. I still get their newspaper,” I said. “Here’s my copy. I just finished reading it.” We talked a little more about things we could do together in the weeks ahead, then shook hands and went our separate ways.

They were in Vietnam and I was in college 35 years ago. History moves at its own pace, but it never stands still. Every person and every situation is a mass of contradictions, but some aspect is primary. A long-range outlook is essential, but so is a sense of urgency. I plan to see those guys again real soon. It seems the pace of events is speeding up, so we had better move with it.

Red Doctor

UAW Opposes Bush, Not Imperialism

DETROIT, MI, March 16 — On Feb. 3, United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 600’s General Council, representing 30,000 active and retired members at the Ford Rouge and other plants, voted unanimously to oppose war on Iraq.

Over 120 local unions have passed resolutions against the war, including UAW 1700, 600, 909 and 1981. On Feb. 22, Local 600 hosted an anti-war forum, attended by about 200 people. One speaker tied the war drive to “third world” conditions in Detroit. A UAW-Daimler-Chrysler-Jeep member described how the bosses are using the war atmosphere to justify forced overtime.

UAW Vice Pres. for Organizing, Bob King asked why Detroit labor couldn’t turn out more members for anti-war events. The answer? They don’t want to. Located in the largest concentration of Arab workers and students anywhere outside the Middle East, the unions have mobilized very few, even though most oppose the war. Only 20 black workers attended the Feb. 22 forum. The union leaders and liberal politicians have a tiger by the tail trying to control the mass movement against the war. They want to rush to the head of the march and lead it to the voting booths and the Democratic Party. By mobilizing hundreds of thousands of workers, they risk unleashing strikes and job actions that might oppose the

imperialist plans of the liberals and open up workers to communist leadership.

The union leaders are against Bush, not the ruling class. They’re cynically using mass anti-war sentiment to win working-class acceptance of fascist Homeland Security and even larger, more deadly wars down the road. The UAW backs “joint company-union” programs that help U.S. auto bosses fight the “foreign” competition. They organize auto parts-supplier plants while abandoning the right to strike. They have failed to organize a single “foreign” auto assembly “transplant.” Straight-jacketed by U.S. nationalism and class collaboration, they won’t mobilize too much of anything.

The international anti-war movement presents an opportunity to seriously challenge the misleaders’ patriotic, pro-capitalist outlook. Supposing autoworkers from Toronto to Argentina staged a General Strike against the invasion of Iraq and the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas? Daimler workers from Germany to Brazil could help organize Mercedes “transplants” in Mississippi. “Workers of the World, Unite!” could become a mass outlook. CHALLENGE and bold May Day activities can push things ahead.☸

Demonstration Against KKKop



Community residents protest the flagrantly unjustified, racist shooting of Desmond (“Man-Man”) Ray by cop Charles Ramseur. Ray, a 22-year-old African-American youth, is paralyzed for life after Ramseur shot him in the back. People are signing petitions demanding the firing and indictment of Ramseur. The People’s Coalition for Police Accountability in Prince George’s County, MD, [adjoining the District of Columbia] is organizing the grassroots campaign. Ramseur has shot four people in recent years and has escaped any punishment.☸

CIA Trained Saddam To Be Fascist Killer

The Saddam Hussein that the Bush gang is painting as evil personified is a creature of four U.S. administrations, Democrats Kennedy and Johnson, and Republicans Reagan and Bush, Sr. The Saddam Hussein we now know didn't "suddenly" appear in 1991. His roots go back to the Kennedy era.

In 1958, General Abdel Karim Kassem ousted a pro-Western monarchy in Iraq. During that decade, the Communist Party of Iraq (CPI) had become arguably the largest mass organization in the Middle East. With a multi-ethnic membership and leadership of Arabs, Kurds and Jews, and a mass base among oil workers, the CPI organized huge general strikes and might have taken power. But it backed off under its "united front" with the "progressive" wing of bosses opposed to British and U.S. imperialism, which led to its downfall. Thousands were killed by the same generals and bosses it had sought unity with.

By 1961 Kassem was "Seeking new arms rivaling Israel's, threatening Western oil interests...[and] talking openly of challenging the dominance of America in the Middle East....Kassem was regarded by Washington as a dangerous leader who must be removed." ("A Tyrant 40 Years in the Making" by Roger Morris, New York Times, 3/14)

By 1963, Kennedy had the CIA set up shop in Kuwait from which it radioed orders to, and organized rebels in Egypt, Syria, Iran and Iraq itself, including arming Kurdish insurgents, to overthrow Kassem. (All this was disclosed by the Senate Committee on Intelligence and by David Wise, an authority on the CIA.)

On Feb. 8, 1963, CIA-organized forces staged a coup, backed by Britain and Israel. The Kennedy administration "immediately befriended the successor regime. 'Almost certainly a gain for our side,'" Kennedy National Security aide Robert Komer wrote JFK on the day of the coup. (Morris, NYT)

Then, says Morris, "As its instrument, the CIA had chosen the...anti-communist Baath Party....Among party members colluding with the CIA in 1962 and 1963 was Saddam Hussein" [then 25].... The 1963

coup was accompanied by a bloodbath. Using lists of suspected Communists and other leftists supplied by the CIA, the Baathists systematically murdered untold numbers... — killings in which Saddam Hussein himself...participated."

The U.S. "also sent arms to the new regime, weapons later used against the same Kurdish insurgents the U.S. had backed against Kassem and then abandoned. Soon...Mobil, Bechtel and British Petroleum were doing business in Baghdad — for American firms, their first major involvement in Iraq."

Then in 1968, in-fighting within this regime led to still another CIA-backed coup, during the Johnson administration, enabling a Baathist general to seize control and bring Saddam Hussein next to the seat of power.

In the 1980s, during the Iraq-Iran war, the U.S.-backed Saddam—the U.S. had lost Iran when its puppet, the Shah, had been overthrown in 1979. They sent Iraq's dictator arms and chemical and biological materials (see CHALLENGE, 3/5, and the UN weapons inspectors' report). These formed the basis of his celebrated Weapons of Mass Destruction that the Bush gang is so "upset" about. But we should be very

clear: Saddam Hussein, a fascist dictator, is an enemy of the Iraqi and international working class. The CIA taught Saddam how to kill workers and Reds. He deserves to be smashed — along with U.S. imperialism — by Iraqi workers and workers everywhere.

The "icing" on the U.S.-backed "cake" came in 1990 when Bush, Sr.'s ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, told Saddam that any dispute with Kuwait was "an internal matter," of no concern to the U.S., giving him the green light to invade. Of course, U.S. rulers soon decided that Saddam's control of Kuwaiti oil fields might make him too much of a threat to U.S. "friend" Saudi Arabia, world's largest oil producer, so for the first time in three decades, the U.S. reversed gears on the "evil" it had created.

Concludes Morris, 'In the last half cen-



During the 1980's the U.S. was buddy-buddy with Saddam and Iraq. The U.S. gave military aid to Iraq in its war against neighboring Iran. Here, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, then National Security Advisor for Ronald Reagan shakes hands with Hussein.

tury, regime change in Iraq has been accompanied by bloody reprisals....If a new war in Iraq seems fraught with danger and uncertainty, just wait for the peace."

Why, on the eve of a U.S. invasion of Iraq, has the New York Times printed such an exposé of the U.S. creation of Saddam? Perhaps it's their way of telling the Bush crowd they'd better be prepared because they may be opening up a Pandora's box of uncontrolled opposition to U.S. imperialism worldwide.☸

"Desert Quicksand — Mideast Invasions Hold Many Pitfalls, History Teaches"

This was the headline in the March 19 Wall Street Journal.

"For two centuries, foreign powers have been conquering Mideast lands for their own purposes....but in nearly every incursion...have endured a raft of unintended consequences. From Napoleon's drive into Egypt through Britain's rule of Iraq in the 1920s to Israel's march into Lebanon in 1982, Middle East nations have tempted conquerors only to send them reeling....

"[Entering Egypt] said Napoleon...I have come to restore your rights!....Napoleon's real goals involved France's colonial rivalry with Britain....The French left within three years....but lost both money and men from its Egyptian adventure....

"Britain's troops landed in what's now Iraq in 1914...'bursting with confidence in an easy and early victory'...wrote

Lawrence of Arabia....Instead it took four years for Britain, with vastly superior arms, to conquer all of Iraq....British troops killed 6,000 to 10,000 Iraqis putting down a revolt...in 1920....To suppress later rebellions by Iraqi Kurds, the British invented the technique of strafing civilians from the air..."

British Prime Minister Anthony Eden lost his post when his attempt to seize the Suez Canal from Egypt in 1956 failed.

Then the Israelis "surged into Lebanon in 1982 to crush Palestinian guerrillas....But as Ariel Sharon...pushed to the outskirts of Beirut [and] killed thousands of civilians, the offensive stalled amid furious criticism" and eventually Israel was forced to withdraw.

When Reagan sent the Marines into Lebanon in 1983, a suicide bomber in a truck killed 300 of them in one shot. Reagan also withdrew.

Israeli military historian Col. Meir Piai predicts that, "The longer the Americans stay [in Iraq], the deeper they will find themselves in the mud." ☸

"Don't Drink from a Poisoned Well": Anti-Communist "Research" Uncovered

The Soviet Union was the only country that gave aid and manpower to the Spanish Republic's 1936-1939 fight against the fascist armies of General Francisco Franco, who got massive aid from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. All the "Allies" — Great Britain, France and the rest of Europe, plus the USA — tacitly helped Franco and the fascists by refusing to aid the Republic. The Communist International organized thousands of workers worldwide to join the fight against fascism in Spain — the "International Brigades."

Capitalist and Trotskyite historians have spread many lies about this massive act of proletarian internationalism. From some discussion among friends, the following example of anti-communist lies was discovered.

In his book Modern Times (NY: Harper & Row, 1983), reactionary historian Paul Johnson writes:

"During the rest of 1937 and well into 1938, many thousands of POUM (Party Of United Marxists) members, and indeed other Leftists of all descriptions, were executed or tortured to death in Communist prisons. They included a large number of foreigners, such as Trotsky's former secretary, Erwin Wolff, the Austrian socialist Kurt Landau, the British journalist 'Bob'

Smilie and a former lecturer at Johns Hopkins University, José Robles. Among those who just managed to escape were Orwell and Willy Brandt, the future German Chancellor." [note 87] pp. 334-335.

Note 87, p. 739 reads: "Thomas, op.cit., 705-6; Bernard Crick, George Orwell: A Life (London 1980), 224-6." According to note 48 to the same chapter, "Thomas" is Hugh Thomas, The Spanish Civil War, 1961 edition.

Here is what Thomas really says:

"Although Nin was the only member of the POUM's leadership to be killed, a number of international sympathizers with it also died in mysterious circumstances: these included Erwin Wolf, half-Czech, half-German, another ex-secretary of Trotsky, who was kidnapped in Barcelona, and never seen again; the Austrian socialist, Kurt Landau; Marc Rhein, the journalist son of the old Menshevik leader, Rafael Abramovich (Abramovich himself made two fruitless journeys to Spain to discover what had happened); José Robles, sometime lecturer at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, perhaps killed because he had been interpreter to the disgraced General Berzin; and, perhaps, 'Bob' Smilie, the English journalist, son of the miners' leader of that name, who had come to Spain on

behalf of the British Independent Labour party and died apparently of appendicitis, in a prison to which he had been sent without justification."

In short, according to Thomas, (a) nothing about "thousands"; (b) no evidence that Wolf, Landau, Rhein, Robles, or Smillie had been killed by Communists. Wolf disappeared. Rhein's father failed to clarify his son's disappearance. Robles and Smillie were "perhaps" killed — though then we learn Smillie "died apparently of appendicitis, in a prison."

The only things said on Crick, pp. 224-226, of any relevance to Johnson's quotation are the following:

"On returning to the front from leave, Orwell had learned that another member of the International Labor Party contingent, Bob Smillie (the grandson of the great Scottish miners' leader), had been arrested after coming back to Spain from a propaganda tour in England. Smillie was in prison in Valencia (and he was to die there, though whether from acute appendicitis or murdered by the Communists has never been cleared up)." (p. 224)

"They [Orwell and two friends, McNair



Images of Workers fighting in the Spanish Civil War

and Cottman] tried to persuade Brandt to come with them to England but he refused.

According to Crick, then, (a) Smillie's death "has never been cleared up." No evidence is given for the allusion to possible Communist murder; (b) nothing is said about Brandt having "just managed to escape," or being under any special danger at all.

Every single statement and allegation in this paragraph of Johnson's is a fabrication, unsupported by the very sources — both highly anti-communist sources — to which he refers in his footnote. Further research by others has confirmed that there is no evidence at all that those mentioned by Johnson — Wolf, Landau, Robles, or Smillie — were killed by Communists.